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The question that a Bill to amend the Madras Town-Planning Act, 1920 (Bill No. 1 of 1934), be taken into consideration was put and carried.

Clauses 1 to 6 were put and carried.

The Preamble was put and carried.

The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"I beg to move that the Bill be passed into law."

Mr. T. SUNDARA RAO NAYUDU:—"I second it."

The motion was put and carried and the Bill was passed into law.

The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"Mr. President, I suggest that the consideration of the next item on the agenda be taken up after lunch."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The House will now adjourn and reassemble at half past two."

(After lunch—2-30 p.m.)

XI.—A BILL TO AMEND THE MADRAS LOCAL BOARDS ACT, 1920, AND THE MADRAS ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACT, 1920 (BILL NO. 2 OF 1934).*

* The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"Sir, I beg to introduce Bill No. 2 of 1934—a Bill to amend the Madras Local Boards Act, 1920, and the Madras Elementary Education Act, 1920, for certain purposes—and move that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the undermentioned members:—

- (1) The Kumara Raja of Venkatagiri.
- (2) Mr. W. K. M. Langley.
- (3) „ P. Bayappa Reddi.
- (4) Rao Sahib N. Siva Raj.
- (5) Raja of Khallikote.
- (6) Diwan Bahadur A. Appadurai Pillai.
- (7) Mr. M. A. Muthiah Chettiyar.
- (8) Rao Bahadur G. Jagannatha Raju.
- (9) Mr. M. B. Rangaswami Reddi.
- (10) „ V. P. Narayanan Nambiyar.
- (11) Rao Sahib C. Jayaram Nayudu.
- (12) Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar.
- (13) „ R. M. Palat.
- (14) Diwan Bahadur B. Muniswami Nayudu.
- (15) Mr. P. V. Krishnayya Choudari.
- (16) Diwan Bahadur C. S. Ratnasabhapati Mudaliyar.
- (17) Mr. T. C. Srinivasa Ayyangar.
- (18) Dr. P. Subbarayan.
- (19) Khan Bahadur Mahmud Schamnad Sahib Bahadur.
- (20) The Pattagar of Palayakottai.
- (21) Mr. A. B. Shetty.
- (22) Khan Bahadur Yahya Ali Sahib Bahadur.
- (23) Mr. A. McG. C. Tampoe.
- (24) „ F. Conran Smith.

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- (25) Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam.
- (26) „ T. A. Ramalingam Chettiyar.
- (27) „ C. Natesa Mudaliyar.
- (28) Diwan Bahadur S. Ellappa Chettiyar.
- (29) Mr. V. M. Ramaswami Mudaliyar.
- (30) Sriman M. G. Patnaik Mahasayo.
- (31) Mr. P. Peddi Raju.
- (32) Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. Patro.
- (33) Khan Sahib Syed Tajuddin Sahib Bahadur.
- (34) Mr. G. Ranganatha Mudaliyar.
- (35) „ P. K. Ramachandra Padayachi.
- (36) „ A. Pl. N. V. Nadimuthu Pillai.
- (37) „ M. A. Manikkavelu Nayakar.
- (38) Diwan Bahadur M. Gopalaswami Mudaliyar.
- (39) Mr. K. Koti Reddi.
- (40) Rao Sahib V. I. Muniswami Pillai.
- (41) Mr. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed.
- (42) The hon. the Raja of Bobbili—*Mover*.

As the number of members exceeds 15, I also beg to move that Standing Order No. 39 be suspended.

“The object of this Bill has been explained in the Press Communiqué issued by the Government on 6th January 1934 and printed as an appendix to this Bill—copies of which are in the hands of hon. Members. I do not therefore propose to take much of the valuable time of the House by repeating those arguments. Before touching upon the salient features of this measure, I wish to trace the history of the various proposals made from time to time to reduce the number of the different kinds of local bodies in this province. In G.O. No. 625, L. & M., dated 11th February 1926, the Government appointed a committee for investigating the possibility of making the village panchayats as the basis of local boards administration. The committee consisted of the following members:—

- (1) Late Raja of Panagal, Minister for Local Self-Government.
- (2) Rai Bahadur T. M. Narasimhacharlu.
- (3) The late Raja of Ramnad.
- (4) Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliyar (now Diwan Bahadur).
- (5) „ P. C. Venkatapathi Raju.
- (6) Diwan Bahadur B. Muniswami Nayudu.
- (7) Khan Bahadur Khalifullah Sahib Bahadur.
- (8) Mr. Ghattala Sahib.
- (9) Mr. F. Noyce (now Sir).
- (10) Diwan Bahadur N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar.
- (11) Mr. Narayana Rao Nayudu.
- (12) „ Ramachandra Mudaliyar.

I could not find the actual proceedings of the first meeting of the committee. It is stated in the printed note prepared by Diwan Bahadur N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, who was the Inspector-General of Panchayats then, that the committee at its first meeting agreed tentatively that taluk boards might be abolished and that the financial

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resources might be distributed between the district boards and the panchayat boards. Union boards might go out of existence. I have only mentioned some of the recommendations. I have not completed the list. These proposals were circulated to certain Collectors and district boards for opinion. Opinions were almost unanimous with regard to the question of the abolition of taluk boards. Then owing to the general elections, the matter was left over to be decided by the new Council. There was a change in the Ministry and the hon. Dr. Subbarayan, who was then in charge of Local Self-Government, decided in June 1927 that taluk boards should be abolished and the duties performed by them should be entrusted to subjects committees of the district boards, finance, sanitary, public works, etc. A Bill was actually drafted in 1928 on these lines and it was printed. But when it came to actual implication of these decisions, other counsels prevailed and the result has been the existing Local Boards Act, 1930, which provides for the constitution of a taluk board for each revenue taluk. On the repeal of the Village Panchayats Act, 1920, village panchayats were brought under the Local Boards Act and specific sources of income were allotted to them. In addition to the three pies' share in the land-cess, panchayats can levy profession-tax, licence fees during fairs and festivals, on markets, cart-stands and slaughter-houses. At the time of the passing of the Local Boards Act, 1920, there were only 2,000 panchayats. Now the number exceeds 5,000. They are increasing rapidly. I believe I am right in saying that we are all agreed that panchayats should be developed as the unit of local self-government, and so before long, the taluk boards will be deprived of both their income and functions. In accordance with the policy laid down in the amended Act, the number of taluk boards has increased from 130 to 208. Of these, 90 taluk boards have recurring deficits; 39 have just enough money to pay establishments, travelling allowance and contingencies. It will be thus seen that the majority of them, namely, 129 out of 208, are bankrupts and I am sure a fair number of the remainder have balanced budgets only on paper. Bifurcated taluk boards have been unable to satisfactorily maintain their hospitals and are able to provide little or no money for public services. It has been suggested that we should go back to the old system of multiple taluk boards; but in the year 1930-31, I find that out of 130 taluk boards, 46 of them were unable to balance their budgets. Owing to the allocation of specific sources of revenue to panchayats as mentioned above, there is no doubt that the majority of the old taluk boards would have large deficits by now if the *status quo* had been left undisturbed.

"Now, turning to the financial position of the district boards, the result of the amended Act and the Madras Motor Vehicles Taxation Act has been to deprive them of an income of Rs. 33 lakhs in spite of drastic retrenchment. Under existing conditions 12 out of 25 district boards will work at a deficit. If normal provision is made for maintenance of roads and other services, considerable addition to their resources is necessary.

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"In the year 1932, a special officer was appointed to examine the financial position of the local boards. The main recommendation made by him was the restoration of tolls on non-motor vehicles. For the first two years drastic retrenchments were carried out in the budgets. Diversion and ear-marking of funds such as the Village Development Fund and the railway cess accumulations were permitted in order to balance the budgets, in the hope that normal conditions would be restored. But unfortunately the rapid deterioration of the financial position continues. In July 1933, a special staff was appointed to examine the financial position of the taluk boards and district boards. From the data collected we have issued the press communiqué. From a careful examination of the materials available, it is found that local boards are faced with an imminent financial breakdown. The Government have therefore come to the conclusion that there is no alternative but to abolish the taluk boards altogether. There is no service rendered by these intermediate boards which cannot be performed either by district boards or panchayats. Not only is this duplication of agency wasteful but a stage has been reached when the taluk board has outlived its usefulness.

"Now let us examine the structure of local self-government in some of our sister Provinces and States. In the United Provinces they have 45 district boards for a population of the same size as ours. In the Central Provinces they have district boards and local boards smaller in size than the revenue districts. In Bombay, the Re-organization Committee recently recommended the abolition of taluk boards in order to encourage the growth of panchayats, and to place the district boards on sound financial footing. In Mysore, which is a model State, taluk boards have been abolished.

"The proposals of the Government therefore provide for the abolition of the taluk boards and incidentally of the Village Development Fund and for the bifurcation of the larger district boards. As it is considered not worth while to plunge the Province in another general election within the triennium, transitory provisions have been devised.

"In this connexion I wish to state that certain doubts have been raised as to the wisdom of abolishing the Village Development Fund. But in actual practice I find that the purposes for which this fund was constituted, namely, construction of village roads, rural water-supply, public health—all these services are also to be provided by the district boards, and there will be no necessity, if the taluk boards are abolished, to continue this fund.

"It is proposed that out of this fund which amounts to about Rs. 16 lakhs, Rs. 5 lakhs, i.e., the additional three pies in the rupee, should be given to the panchayats and that the balance of Rs. 11 lakhs should go to the district boards. Of course this question of the abolishing of the Village Development Fund is not one of the principles underlying this Bill; it is a matter which in the opinion of the Government makes no difference. Whether you have it as a

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separate fund or add it to the general resources of the district boards—it is a matter for further consideration by the Select Committee.

“ It has also been stated, Sir, that regarding the provision for the appointment of an educational officer and the management and control of educational schools, the Government are depriving the local bodies of their powers and that in the future the entire control either in regard to the opening or the closing of the schools or in regard to the number of schools required for the district, will be in the hands of the Government. I may at once state that that is not the intention of the Government. I believe, Sir, I am right in saying that this provision follows generally or to a great extent the provisions in the City Municipal Act where there are provisions for statutory standing committees. If there is any such fear in the minds of hon. Members that the Government desire to take over control of these schools, I may state that it will be possible—if they still consider it necessary—to devise necessary safeguards in the Select Committee stage.

“ Another point that has been raised is the question of the fate of a large number of employees in taluk boards. Of course district boards are going to take over all the functions of the taluk boards, and I think as far as elementary education is concerned, all the staff would still remain, but under the charge of the district boards. As regards the remaining staff, it is believed that the district boards will at least have to retain 25 per cent of the existing establishment of the taluk boards and when the district boards are bifurcated, as proposed by the Government, we expect another 25 per cent to be absorbed. Government also propose to fix definite educational qualifications in the future for local board employees and also make other rules about retirement after the age of 55 years more stringent. They hope by these methods that a certain proportion of the remaining staff would be absorbed. However, there will be about 80 per cent still remaining; and Government have taken power to frame rules to see that in all future vacancies, whenever qualified taluk board employees are available, they are employed by the district boards.

“ Finally, I wish to state that with all the materials available to the Government, they have come to the conclusion that it is not possible to devise, without extra taxation, any methods by which all the three kinds of local bodies could be maintained. I do realize, Sir, that this is a very drastic change we are introducing in the structure of local self-government. Although I am gratified to see that the proposals of the Government have been welcomed by the Press generally and—subject of course to correction by my Friends opposite—by a large section of the population, yet I do realize that to a certain extent there is scope for difference of opinion in a matter like this. At the same time, I am sure that if hon. Members have any doubts, with the materials and data available to Government, I will be able to convince them that this is a step which will ultimately prove to be in the right direction. If there is any further information

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required or any doubts to be cleared during the course of the discussions, I shall be very glad to supply such information or clear such doubts."

Mr. T. SUNDARA RAO NAYUDU:—"I second it."

* Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"Mr. President, it was with considerable hesitation, Sir, that I gave notice of an amendment—

'that the consideration of this subject be deferred pending a report of an enquiry committee of the condition of local bodies and recommendations to improve and place them on a sound financial footing.'

I know, Sir, it was stated in one of the speeches made by the hon. the Raja of Bobbili that as a result of deep thinking covering a period of not less than six months, he had come to the conclusion that the taluk boards should be abolished; and I may say for that reason that the hon. the Raja of Bobbili has acquired very soon the habit of riding a coach and four in his party. Sir, if the hon. the Raja of Bobbili had spent six months of his anxious time over this very difficult question and come to this conclusion, I can only say that the result of his deliberations has been quite erroneous and marks out—even as admitted by himself—a violent departure and a reactionary proposal made in the framework of local self-government. It is sought to be justified on the ground that many local bodies are on the verge of financial ruin and that the taluk boards themselves have no particular duties to perform which cannot be performed by one or other of the other two bodies. Sir, I would like in this connexion to draw the attention of the hon. the Minister to the previous history of local self-governing institutions in this Presidency. I have been under the very consoling and gratifying belief that Madras, so far as the Local Self-Government Department is concerned, is leading and is an example to many other Provinces in this country; but I am sorry to find that the hon. the Chief Minister is making himself responsible for shunting Madras to a backward position of copying some unimproved policies of other Provinces in the matter.

"Sir, it is nearly eighty years ago that the idea of developing local self-governing institutions in this Presidency arose and it was due to a Collector that this idea originated. He persuaded the Government to allot some amount of money for the purpose of local expenditure and to constitute committees of a number of the local people in order that their needs might be properly looked into. It was about twenty years later that an actual Act was passed, constituting local bodies and allotting certain incomes to them and also assigning the duties to be performed by them. I should like to read what has now become a more advanced view than the hon. the Chief Minister's view, of the Governor-General in Council in regard to the formation of local units:

'In pursuance of this Act, i.e., the Act of 1871, the Government divided the Presidency into 36 circles and a gradual extension was contemplated . . .

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“ Those circle boards were not really revenue district boards, but were boards for areas less than a revenue district, and as a matter of fact, it was the taluk board that was originally started and later on only the district boards came into existence. Writing on the working of those boards, the Government observed :

‘ The boards have become more of a reality and power than they were in earlier days. Members begin to appreciate their functions and positions. They take greater interest in the discharge of their duties, while the people have learnt to value the work done for them by the boards and to look to them for help in all matters of local interest. Where so much has been done and where experience has shown that the institutions suit the people and supply their wants, we feel that great caution should be exercised in introducing radical changes, so that the result of the past and the hopes of the future may not in any way be imperilled.’

I may repeat that same advice to the hon. the Chief Minister, to be cautious in the matter of dislocating the framework that was established nearly seventy years ago.

“ Later on, the Governor-General in Council observed :

‘ We consider it absolutely necessary that in the first instance a district board should in all cases be nominated by the Government—this is, speaking of the nominations and elections. Its first duty would be to work out a scheme for taluk committees in those districts which are capable of this more advanced form of administration. Similarly the taluk boards when instituted would work out schemes of rural sanitary committees and unions.’

The Government of India in their various resolutions have indicated the supreme importance of making the unit of administration in matters connected with local self-government so limited in area as to ensure both local knowledge and local interest on the part of each member of the board or governing body, and has therefore concluded that ordinarily the taluka or tahsil should form the jurisdiction of the primary board, and have also stated that even smaller jurisdictions might be formed in favourable circumstances. ‘ The governing body or trustee of the unions should, we think, in the first instance be appointed by the taluk committee.’

“ Sir, that was the importance which the Government had given to the taluk boards. The *raison d'être* of giving so much importance to the taluk boards is the proximity of those institutions to the areas concerned.

“ We have known of instances where the functions of taluk boards 3 p.m.
have been taken over by district boards only with a view to neglect them. If I may cite a personal example, it was only yesterday that I motored to Venkatagiri and I was told that one of the roads which was originally with the taluk board was transferred to the district board and that its condition now is worse than a cart-track. My point is that if it is the idea of the Government to educate the people in the administration of their own affairs, if it is the idea of the Government to see that the needs of each locality should be zealously watched by the people living nearby, it is necessary that the taluk boards should be maintained. When a central body like the district board or a board with a lesser area than the present district board should

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be constituted, the persons attending those district boards will only be those who live around that area and naturally the amount that will be spent upon roads and other conveniences will be to suit the demands made by those persons who will actually be present at the meetings. It is not possible for poor people from outlying corners to attend a district board meeting in order to press upon the attention of the district board their local needs, as the district board would comprise in itself the representatives of other local areas as well.

“Now, with reference to the financial breakdown, I do not believe that financial breakdown is a novel feature so far as these local bodies are concerned. It has been there for a long time. In this connexion I have got to remind, that the duties which these local bodies are asked to administer are essentially those of Government. The Government created this agency for the purpose of discharging a part of their duties. If the agencies complain about want of funds, the remedy will not be by the abolition of that agency by which these amenities will be looked into but by replenishing the resources of these agencies. When we have constituted the local bodies and assigned certain portions of the revenue to those bodies, it is necessary that they should manage their affairs with their resources, is an argument which at any rate, the representatives of the people cannot agree. It may be an argument of the hon. the Finance Member. What were the conditions under which these local bodies were constituted? The mileage of roads maintained by district boards was 17,544,113 miles of new roads and 518 miles were in progress—I am speaking of the year 1880–81. Since then the mileage must have increased at least by 50 per cent; and who should finance the construction of these roads? Now, for the sake of example, let us take this point. If the taluk board is not able to maintain all the needs of the taluk, you must find some means of augmenting the resources of the taluk boards. As a matter of fact, instead of the Chief Minister asking the Finance Member to release a portion of the provincial revenues for this purpose, he asks him to give his support for abolishing them on the mere ground that there is no money—it seems rather a very sorry feature for the present administration. As a matter of fact, when the Government appointed a special officer to look into the financial condition of the local bodies, at a particular time when he was about to enter into the investigation of the financial condition of taluk boards, he was told ‘please stop there.’ Sir, this is the report, contained in the Government Order, quoted in paragraph 1 of the special officer:—

‘Government require me to make proposals for reconstituting taluk boards. Owing to various causes, several taluk boards have not been constituted by Government in the period of my special duty and the period of my special duty was very short; I am told I need not visit the concerned taluk boards to discuss and settle the reallocation of the resources.’

Therefore, Sir, this special officer who was specially appointed to look into the financial condition of these taluk boards has been told ‘You had better not get into the field,’ because even by that time Government had made up their minds to abolish the taluk boards and transfer the revenues to district boards.

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" Now, Sir, with regard to the district boards, the report is a very eloquent commentary upon the most unsatisfactory condition of the finances of the district boards. If there is any justification for the abolition of the boards on account of their financial condition it is the district boards. The hon. the Minister would not touch them, because there are many district board presidents on that side. But, let them all transfer themselves to this side, I will see if they vote for the abolition of district boards or taluk boards. The following are the figures dealing with the financial position of the district boards. Receipts Rs. 13,68,30,000 and expenditure Rs. 1,51,31,500; and these figures were made from the budget of each district. Calculations were made in cases where the toll compensation was taken at a figure fixed by Government. In the case of the Chingleput district board for example the budget does not include provision for capital or unforeseen expenditure. The revenues of many of the district boards are only under estimates. Deficits in the case of district boards is a serious one. The special officer has remarked that the loss of revenue from very important sources, namely, land-cess, tolls and licence fees in the course of one year, has made readjustment difficult. Therefore, Sir, if there is any financial breakdown, it is in the case of district boards. It is with a view to go to the rescue of these famished and financially ruined district boards that the hon. the Chief Minister wants to abolish the taluk boards.

" Now, Sir, who brought about this financial ruin even to these district boards. It was the disregard of the sane advice not to pass the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act that has brought about all these difficulties. Let them deny that. They won't deny that, but they will say, we will try to remedy it by a restoration of the tolls on vehicles other than motors. It remains to be seen how far the Chief Minister is going to succeed in increasing the revenues of these local bodies by the levy of these tolls. Whatever that may be, the financial breakdown was brought about by the Government themselves. If the Government should own its mistake, it would be up to them to retrace their steps and rectify the mistake they have committed.

" After all, much criticism was levelled against the existing Act. Because every revenue taluk was constituted into a taluk board that the trouble has increased. Probably, this criticism is levelled on account of the fact that the framer of the Bill was Dr. Subbarayan and the Minister that was responsible for its passing was my hon. Friend, Mr. Muniswami Nayudu. Whatever that may be, the Justice Party was morally responsible for passing that Act. I would like to approve of the action of the Justice Party because it is a logical consequence of the development of local self-government of constituting taluk boards and smaller boards even for smaller areas in order to concentrate the attention of the local people to their needs and requirements. But, what the hon. the Chief Minister is doing is to go back and in going back he is doing the reverse of the very idea of self-government in this Presidency. On the one hand, Sir Samuel Hoare is cutting the ground under our feet by practically removing all powers

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which even a Provincial Government could possibly enjoy under the existing Act. To-day, in the Madras Presidency, the Raja of Bobbili would take his place in the matter of local self-governing institutions. That is exactly what is happening.

"Now, Sir, as regards the question of inadequacy of funds for smaller areas, that is, a taluk board for each revenue taluk was anticipated and it was provided in the existing Act. That the Government do not want, for on the ground of finance it would be impossible to work a taluk board economically. Without taking advantage of the provisions of the existing Act, without understanding the consequences of hastily forming taluk boards for each revenue taluk, the Government proceed for reasons of their own and now they say that the taluk boards have become a failure on account of their constitution. After all, what is the time that has elapsed between the constitution of these taluk boards and to-day. Barely a year has passed between these two dates and now the hon. the Chief Minister wants to reconstitute the whole thing and abolish taluk boards. It seems to me, Sir, another serious and rash step that the Government is taking, very much in detriment to the whole idea of local self-government. Let him try to re-amalgamate the taluk boards into what they were previous to their constitution from each revenue taluk. I believe this argument was in a way anticipated in the speech of the hon. the Chief Minister. He said that even that will not do. What was the material placed before us for agreeing with the hon. the Chief Minister? As a matter of fact, he himself admits that there has not been sufficient material placed before the House or even before the public to agree with him without qualifications. As a matter of fact, at the end of his speech he began to make one confusion or another. He said that according to the Bill, taluk board presidents need not be worried about their seats; their seats would be secured and that he would take them into the reconstituted district boards. On the other hand, he would say to the disbanded employees, that 25 per cent would be taken to district boards, 25 per cent would be sent away on the ground that they have been superannuated and that at least 25 or 30 per cent would be absorbed. I am not very much concerned about the taluk board employees when I am discussing the question of local self-governing institutions. I will come to the question of their employment later on. Apart from the question of re-employment of these disbanded local board employees, are you doing the right thing for the local self-government institutions by proposing a radical change like this, is the question I would put to the hon. the Chief Minister. What he suggests now seems to me an ill-thought out measure. It is there that I would implore the hon. the Chief Minister to take counsel from persons outside, beyond the Secretariat rooms. There are any number of public men in this Presidency who are very well experienced in the matter of local self-government institutions. It would be far better and proper if you take counsel with public men and come to this House with a definite recommendation. It is with that view that I want the hon. the Chief Minister to take into his confidence public men—not merely

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Members of this Council into his confidence—and bring about a comprehensive measure, so that it might not be said that in a matter like this which affects the fundamental rights of self-government, that by sheer force of his party he was able to carry this measure.

“Sir, what would result if this Bill were to be passed into law?—dislocation of the whole framework; centralization of the various works of these self-governing institutions and placing them in the hands of persons who are entirely out of touch with the local needs; disbandment of 2,000 hungry mouths; increase of clerical and technical employment in the reconstituted boards; increase of work to the Educational department; employment of panchayat officers; appointment of executive officers, and the abolition of village development fund. Sir, may I know which of these results is likely to bring in more revenue? I am afraid the hon. Minister is calculating rather wrongly of any possible saving that he would get by the abolition of these taluk boards. It was calculated that the savings would be about 8 lakhs and odd by the abolition. The same thing was said when the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act was passed—there is an unnecessary and undesirable intermediary between the tax-payer and the local board in the shape of the toll-gate contractor. The moment you abolish him, all that money would go into the treasury of the district boards. But the actual result is that the water-flow seems to have gone the other side, quite beyond the expectations of the persons concerned. So also, we have these things now. Sir, there is always a loose talk about these local bodies; at any rate, that loose talk emanates from persons who have become big by being members of these local bodies. They were at one time or another in such bodies, got their training and began to occupy their present places in public life. The moment they rise to the highest rung of the ladder, they take the earliest opportunity to decry the lower rungs of the ladder. I know of several presidents of district boards and hon. Ministers speaking night and day of the manner in which the local bodies are being administered and criticising not only the administration but to some extent the corruption that prevails there. But my submission is that no department of Government is immune from that charge. Sir, I have had occasion to speak to a certain friend of mine who had experience of contract work in the local bodies and Government departments. I do not think his opinion could possibly be refuted, and his opinion is that the payment for work done from the local bodies will be considerably less than what it would be in regard to the Public Works Department. After all, there have been some benami transactions and it is just possible that such transactions might have assumed different shapes in Government departments. So the complaint is general that there is a general deterioration of efficiency in the administration. There is no particular reason why the local bodies alone should be marked out for this kind of criticism. Sir, the hon. Minister said that if he wants any intelligent support to his measure, all that he has got to do is that he has got to place mere facts before this House. How is he going to submit those facts? Is it merely on the basis of area? Is it on the basis of popula-

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tion? Or is it on the basis of large revenues? It must be definitely stated, because I do not think any gentleman could be right to trust the Government to act, irrespective of party or political interests. I know instances how the elections have been attempted to be tampered with for purposes of party considerations? It may be this party or some other party. But these things must be placed above all party considerations. How is he going to reconstitute these district boards? Will it be on the ground that the president of the district board is a member of that party or this party? Is it going to be merely on the basis of area? Or is it merely on the possibility of the reconstituted boards being able to meet the needs of the locality much more efficiently than what is now being done? Secondly, I will now come to the question of the disbandment of these 2,000 men. In these days when the Governments are straining their nerves to launch public works for the purpose of relieving unemployment, it seems to me unfortunate that it should rest with the hon. Minister, leading a so-called popular party, to make these employees go out of their jobs. Sir, what their plight will be may be better imagined than described. I have had a typical letter from one of the taluk board employees; he says: 'I am a young man of 30 years of age. I was employed only three years ago. Thinking this post will be permanent, I got married and even by this time got two children. I do not know what is going to happen to me, my wife and children.' (Laughter.) Sir, that is the kind of plaintive and pitious cry that we receive day to day with regard to the abolition of the taluk boards. Now, all these could possibly be ignored if this is going to improve the position. I am afraid it will not. But if, in the opinion of the hon. Minister, it will, let us know what is the increase in establishment that would be necessary for the reconstituted district boards. Let them tell us how many clerks the reconstituted district boards will have to employ and whether there won't be the appointment of district board engineers for the new district boards. Because these have a greater bearing on the question. If any duplication of the establishment is going to occur by way of appointment of district board engineers, supervising officers and all the rest of that, what is the actual saving that can be accrued to these local bodies by the abolition of the taluk boards? Then, with regard to the education, the hon. Minister seems to have modified his opinion as a result of six months' training because he now says that he could possibly retain the control over the schools by constituting standing committees instead of handing over education to the Inspectors appointed by the Education department."

The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"It is not that that I stated. It is never the intention of Government to take over these schools. If hon. Members have any doubt on the point, I am prepared to clear the doubts, in the Select Committee."

MR. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"There are very many doubts which could be cleared without going to members of his Party when the Bill comes to the Select Committee. But, whatever he says must pass muster in the public. Let us know really what the situation is."

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What are your ultimate proposals with regard to management and supervision of these institutions of education? I find from the report of the Special Officer that his recommendations are far more good than the recommendations made by the hon. Minister. With regard to the taluk boards, even though he was not allowed to examine the question completely, he suggested that 'secondly the most important function of a taluk board is the administration of the elementary education fund. Administratively, the taluk boards seem to be pre-occupied with the popular service of communications. The expenditure of these taluk boards, barring the ear-marked expenditure on elementary education, is largely on "management." In almost all offices, the strength of the staff is too much and the scales in an office is too many. Provision of funds for roads is not adequate if it is to finance adequately a reasonable length of roads and serves only to divert some money to ineffective channels of expenditure. Elementary education fund looms large in the financial transactions of the taluk boards. The fund balances itself in several taluk boards, though in some cases in Malabar, West Godavari and Kurnool, large diversions have been made, from this fund, while the liabilities to be met out of this fund have been left unliquidated. There seems to be avoidable waste in the organization of elementary schools, in the staffing them, and in the scales of pay ruling among the teachers.' Therefore the Special Officer has suggested drastic retrenchment wherever the Government found avoidable expenditure of money. Instead of doing that, to abolish taluk boards this year, to increase the taluk boards in 1935, to amalgamate them in 1936 and to abolish every taluk board and transfer them to Government in 1937 seems to be the policy of a capricious Minister and not that of a well-thinking Minister. I therefore think that instead of giving room for the complete dislocation of strength of local self-government sufficient counsel be taken from amongst members or from persons well tried in these matters of local self-government and consult persons who are interested in the running of these bodies. Along with this, I have got to say there have been boards that have not been even informed of the possibility of abolition. I know, Sir, and I say this with apologies to the district board presidents, several of whom are sitting on the opposite side. (A voice: 'What about those behind?') they are all with me. I know that these district board presidents have no sympathy for these taluk board presidents. They seem to be considering as competing bodies. That was not the intention of these bodies at all. The district board president is practically in the place of the Government, supervising the work of the taluk boards with a parental regard and affection, to advise them whenever necessary and conduct their affairs. Instead of that, there seems to be jealousy between the district board and the taluk board presidents. If only there are taluk board presidents in this Council, I am sure this Bill will not see the light of day.

"But, as it is, it is not necessary in the interests of taluk board presidents or in the interests of particular bodies that this matter ought

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to be considered. We have got to examine the question purely from the point of view of concentrating attention on the local people for the local needs and as far as possible decentralize power to the local areas. It is with this view that I move this motion."

* Mr. A. B. SHETTY:—"Sir, I second this motion. I am not at all sure that the Government are well advised in coming forward with this measure, which the hon. Minister himself admits, proposes rather too drastic a change. It is rather strange that the Government have not cared to consult even the local bodies on this matter. As my hon. Friend, Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti, said, the Government themselves are responsible for the present financial plight of the local bodies. It is their amending Act of 1930 which has led to the increase in the number of taluk boards from 130 to 203, and the formation of the village development fund that is mainly responsible for the present difficult financial position of the local bodies. The Motor Vehicles Taxation Act has further depleted their resources.

"Sir, some time ago, the Special Officer who was appointed by the Government to consider the stabilization of the financial position of the local bodies presented a report to the Government. I do not find in his report that he recommends the abolition of taluk boards for the purpose of strengthening the financial position of local bodies. Though he did not scrutinize the financial position of taluk boards for the reasons stated in the report, he suggests that the splitting up of taluk boards should not be carried too far. Government do not seem to have paid heed to most of his recommendations. They have not yet given effect to the main recommendation made by him, viz., the re-imposition of tolls on non-motor vehicles, though they have expressed their approval regarding it. They have not so far come forward with the necessary amending Bill. The Special Officer has said that the strength of the staff in several taluk boards is too much and that the scales of pay also are too many. In this respect also no steps have been taken to see that the taluk boards effect retrenchment in their expenditure. The Government say that they expect to save about 8.87 lakhs by the abolition of taluk boards. That is the net gain to the district boards which they hope to bring about as a result of the abolition of taluk boards. I am afraid, that the estimate of the Government in the matter is likely to be found erroneous. A similar miscalculation was made, when they abolished the tolls. This House, therefore, would like to know how the Government arrived at the figure given in their communiqué. What is the saving they hope to effect by the proposal to abolish taluk boards? The roads and the schools will have to be maintained and will be there. So also the dispensaries. The hon. Minister says that a large percentage of the taluk board employees will have to be absorbed in the district board service. So the only saving which can be made is in the pay of a few poorly-paid clerks and peons who will have to be thrown out of employment and in the travelling allowance of presidents and members. As against this, there is the proposal to have several new highly-paid officers. Taking the taluk board employees

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into district board service will mean giving increased scales of pay to these people, because the scale of pay obtaining in the taluk boards is less than the scale obtaining in the district boards. The District Board offices will have to be almost as big as the Collectors' offices, and money spent for providing increased accommodation by extending the office buildings. Further, if there is going to be bifurcation of district boards, it will mean still further expenditure. Again, increase in the number of panchayats will necessarily mean also considerable expenditure on establishment and contingencies. The saving, if any, will be inappreciable and temporary. Expenditure will increase before long and we shall be faced with a similar problem.

"The abolition of the village development fund, it is expected, will bring in some money to the district boards. That is a miscalculation because with the formation of panchayats this amount will have to be made available to them. The six pies cess will have to go entirely to panchayats which are formed and nothing will remain for the district boards. I need hardly say how difficult it will be for the district board presidents or any other officers at the headquarters to supervise the elementary schools which are spread out in the whole district and how hard it will be for them to look after the panchayats. I have my own doubts if the panchayats already started are functioning successfully. The Special Officer in his report says that the panchayats so far started are either dragging on a nominal existence or that their position is uncertain and undetermined. I would say that if panchayats are found working successfully in any particular taluk and they can take over the function of the taluk board, Government may abolish the taluk board there and thus proceed cautiously and slowly in this matter. That should be preferred to the policy of abolishing by one stroke of the pen all taluk boards all over the Presidency. Government can reamalgamate the taluk boards which have been split up and thus reduce their number. The financial position will certainly improve if they reduce the number of taluk boards and have one board for each revenue division. Before considering such remedies Government ought not to rush through with this sweeping measure. If Government had told the taluk boards: 'Look here, you must adjust your budget by effecting retrenchment. If you cannot do that, you will have to go,' I am sure many taluk boards would have set their house in order, and if there were any that were unable to do so, you could have dealt with them in the manner you now suggest. Let the Government examine the position and find out which taluk boards are financially weak and unable to balance their budgets. The Government ought to have taken care to see, even at the time they thought of splitting up taluk boards, whether the new institutions thus set up would be able to stand on their own legs. They did not do so. They are committing one blunder after another. I hope, Sir, that the hon. Minister will not rush through with this Bill on the strength of the majority behind him, but will take counsel and see in what way he could really stabilize the finances of local bodies."

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* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The amendment of Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti is that the consideration of the Madras Local Boards Act (Amending) Bill be deferred pending a report of an enquiry committee of the condition of local bodies and recommendations to improve and place them on a sound financial footing. There are two more amendments. I would allow these two also to be moved, so that we may have discussion of all the amendments together."

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"Mr. President, Sir, I beg to move—

'that the Bill now before the House be circulated for eliciting public opinion and that such public opinion when obtained shall be placed before this House with the remarks of the Government thereon.'

"Sir, I am not so ambitious as the learned Member for the City. I know, Sir, there are limitations for a proposal of that kind placed before the Ministry in power. To appoint a public committee of enquiry and then make it go round eliciting public opinion might, according to the Ministerialists, involve questions of finance, questions of time and various other complications. So I do not wish to have that elaborate procedure contemplated by the Mover of the earlier motion. I confine myself to the practical measure usually adopted by constitutional bodies like ours, namely, that of asking that a measure which introduces such drastic changes in the existing state of affairs ought to be circulated to the public for eliciting public opinion thereon.

"Now, Sir, it will be asked whether there has not been enough opportunity given to the public by the Government by their publication of the Bill. Hon. Members of this House are aware that the Bill was published on the 18th of January by a Gazette Extraordinary and several Members received in the mufassal copy of the gazette only on the 19th or 20th morning and some gentlemen probably much later. So that, hardly a week or ten days have lapsed since the publication of the Bill. It is true that the Government notified their intention even earlier by a press communiqué which they issued on the 6th January. Between the 6th January and the introduction of the Bill to-day on the 29th, there has been only a period of three weeks. That period is not enough is my submission. A Bill which affects or proposes to do away with age-long institutions like the taluk boards, a Bill which affects 2,000 employees in those institutions, a Bill which affects adversely hundreds of persons besides these employees, should have been before the public for a longer time than three weeks. The Bill and the publication of the communiqué gave a rude shock to the members and presidents of the taluk boards, to the institutions which they were in charge of, to the employees of these taluk boards and not least, Sir, to the contractors that were connected with them. (Laughter.) When such a rude shock was given by the press communiqué and later on by the Bill, I only plead for some more time being given to the public, to the persons interested in this measure, and to local self-government institutions generally to suggest better and more practical measures to avoid the present situation.

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"Sir, the reason why the taluk boards were brought into existence has been elaborately explained by the learned Member for the City. I do not wish to traverse the same ground. I would only mention, Sir, that it was with a view to decentralize local self-government and to have in between the district boards and the smallest unit the panchayat boards another institution, that the taluk boards were created. In the West, smaller areas than the taluks are constituted into councils and boards. Following that example and with a view to give greater opportunities and greater facilities for the members of the public to train themselves to be better citizens, the taluk boards were instituted. Now by means of this Bill, it is proposed to take away those opportunities available to the members of the public to become better and better citizens.

"The opportunities that would be available to them being taken away, there must be something which would serve as a substitute for those opportunities. Will the bifurcation of one or two, or three or four district boards be an adequate substitute for the large number of people who will be thrown out without any opportunity or facility of taking part in the self-governing institutions like the taluk board? Another reason why I say that this Bill should be circulated for eliciting public opinion is this: the very bodies which are affected by this measure are primarily taluk boards, and secondarily the district boards and also the panchayat boards. They have not been given any opportunity to explain what exactly their position is, what their attitude would be if this Bill is passed, and how the taluk boards propose to better their financial condition. It might be after the draft Bill was published, that it would be possible for some of the district boards and panchayat boards to give their opinions as to how they propose to meet the budget deficits and how they propose to improve their financial condition. Probably I would not be surprised if several of the taluk boards were to come forward and suggest that there are other sources which could be tapped. It might be that some of the taluk boards would have proposed quarter or half an anna increase instead of agreeing to the total abolition of the taluk boards as a whole. I quite agree that there is a world-wide agitation for the remission of land revenue. But I ask whether it is right to take away the opportunities of these taluk boards in participating in the conduct of self-governing institutions. If an opportunity is given to them to explain, it may be that they may put forward suggestions for the enhancement of cess or some other source of revenue. In the absence of the opinion of the district boards, taluk boards and panchayat boards on this measure, I consider it is but fair and reasonable that this measure should not be hurried through. Sir, from one point of view I should be glad and I will not hesitate to support the measure if it were proposed that we should go back to the old regime even before the amending Act of 1913 or that of 1920 came into force. If it were proposed that there is no other way of escape from the present situation except that of reverting back to the practice that existed in 1920, viz., of handing over these self-governing

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institutions to District Collectors and Revenue Divisional Officers and asking them to administer these institutions, probably from that one point of view, that measure would have received a certain amount of support. But is the position really so bad as that? I would like to know from the Government what exactly are the methods that they have tried to improve the financial situation of these taluk boards. How long have they tried? As has been pointed out, the amending Act has been in force practically for 16 or 17 months and there are many cases in which the election disputes are not yet over and probably they will not be over for a long time to come. That being the case in the course of 16 or 17 months, is it enough experience to come to a decision that these taluk boards are not wanted and that the only way of escape is to abolish them? If I am convinced that the only way that the Government have been able to find after exploring all means and methods is abolition, I shall not hesitate to support this measure. But I would wait for the hon. Minister to convince this House as to how exactly he has come to this conclusion and what are the materials placed before him for coming to such a conclusion. I may ask one question in passing: whether the hon. Minister has had the benefit of advice from the Local Self-Government Advisory Committee? If he has had the benefit of that Committee it would be very helpful if he places it before the Council for their perusal and consideration. I do not think—if I am wrong I may be corrected—that the Advisory Committee on Local Self-Government has had any opportunity of giving advice on a measure of this kind.

“Sir, one point that was raised by the hon. Member for the City of Madras was that the local self-government institutions are part and parcel of Government. If they are part and parcel, why not the Government consider the question of giving subsidies to such of the boards as have had deficit? Of course that will be answered easily by saying that the present finances do not permit such subsidies being given to them which are now financially in a breaking condition. But have the Government tried the method of giving subsidies at least to a few boards whether such a thing is possible or not? In the absence of any experiment in the direction of coming to the rescue of the taluk boards by giving them subsidies or suggesting drastic retrenchments in the expenditure on their services, is this the only alternative to the Government, viz., the abolition of these boards? For one thing, sentiment is against it; for another, there is the question of unemployment. Some 2,000 people are going to be out of employ. We are thankful to the hon. Minister for saying that 75 per cent of them will be absorbed, but what a length of time it would take before 75 per cent of these people get themselves absorbed? I am sure it will not be 10 or 12 years before all the 2,000 people get themselves re-employed. There is also this further complication; after the creation of these new taluk boards, there are those who were in the district board service and who were sent on promotions. And if such people are going to be re-employed by the district boards on a higher salary, I ask how it is going to improve the deficit. It will be an extra commitment to the district board funds.

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Regarding such complications and also regarding the question of re-employment of these persons, the hon. Minister has not made anything clear, although in other respects his speech has been illuminatory.

"I have always stood on the floor of this House for opposing hasty legislation. We have had enough experience of that and the standing monument of that is the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act of which I had the privilege, call it whatever you please, misfortune or fortune, of being the Chairman of the Select Committee. That Act has brought about a good deal of complications in the administration of the district boards. If sufficient means and methods have been found out to make up the loss of revenue, probably that would have been a very healthy movement. Instead of that you are going to be a party for the abolition of these taluk boards. If you give them a fair opportunity and ask them to make constructive suggestions and advise them that they must cut their coat according to their cloth and if they fail to do it, then it will be time enough for abolishing them. The hon. Minister quoted the analogy of the United Provinces and said that only district boards and panchayat boards existed there. But, Sir, in this Province where the district boards are so big and even the taluk boards are so big, is it conducive for the public spirit and for the political well-being to have the district boards at one end and the panchayat units at the other end? If you are going to increase the number of panchayats, will it not also increase the burden on the Government to that extent? I therefore say that it is eminently desirable that there should be a postponement of this measure, unless the hon. Minister is able to satisfy this House that postponement will lead to further complications from which we cannot recover. I am yet to learn from the hon. Minister as to what evidence or materials he has placed before this House that, if we do not pass this measure in the next session or in July or August, the whole thing will collapse and there will be nothing for the Government or the self-governing institutions to go on. I do not think any such case has been made out and I still wait for such a case being made out. If such a case is made out, I shall not hesitate to support the measure.

"I therefore move that this Bill be circulated for eliciting public opinion and such opinion when obtained shall be placed before the House with the remarks of the Government thereon."

MR. ABDUL HAMEED KHAN:—"I rise to second the motion that the Bill be circulated for public opinion. If I do so, it is not because that we wish to oppose any measure that is brought forward by the Ministry in power. I admit that the hon. the Raja of Bobbili has realized the financial difficulties that these local bodies are experiencing in their day to day administration and it is on that account that he has brought forward this measure as the only remedy. Evidently that is his intention. I am afraid, in any attempt to find a remedy for the ills that these local bodies are suffering from, if we pass such a hasty legislation we shall be repeating the mistake that we have committed on former occasions. The analogy of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act has been

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repeated by every hon. Member. With such examples before us we must cry halt to legislations which are conceived in haste. As has been pointed out by the previous speakers, this measure has not been before the public for a long time. Every measure of this character which aims at the abolition of the existing boards, which affects the relationship between one set of people and another and which also affects the very living of a large number of people, as many as two thousands—a measure of such a character should not be expedited merely because, if we pass such a legislation, it may affect favourably the existing conditions of the local bodies in our Province.

4 p.m. “For one thing, if we abolished the taluk boards and contented ourselves merely with one or two boards for a district, we would be taking a retrograde step so far as the development of self-governing institutions in this Presidency is concerned. We must endeavour to have a system of self-governing bodies which will give training to a large number of people in the work of local self-government. The present system is certainly a means by which a large number of our people get their training in self-government and administration. By abolishing taluk boards, we would be removing the scope which a large number of public men now have of serving the people.

“The financial position of local bodies is one of the main arguments for the proposal to abolish taluk boards. But I am not sure that by abolishing taluk boards, the Government will be able to effect a large saving and make enough money available for the purposes of the district board. On the other hand, by centralizing the activities of the district in one board, it would be necessary to employ a large number of highly paid officers whereas local boards would be able to carry on their work with staffs on lesser pay. In any case, anybody who has any experience of local bodies will certainly agree with me when I say that any officer who has to look after a whole district will require not only a higher pay, but also various allowances which may amount to two or three times the salary that local boards will be paying to their own officers. At present we imagine that expenditure can be reduced by the abolition of taluk boards and that district boards can carry on the functions of taluk boards also with an addition of a small staff here and a small staff there. I am afraid we have only to abolish the taluk boards to see into what difficulties we will be landing ourselves. We have already had the experience of the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act and if we pass this Act and abolish taluk boards we will land ourselves not only in financial difficulties, but difficulties which will affect education, public health and other useful functions of local bodies very adversely. The people will ultimately suffer.

“The Bill proposes to abolish taluk boards and create one or two boards for a district to be known by the name of circle boards or some other name. I do not think that it will be enough if we have only two boards in such large districts as we have in our Province. I do not think the functions of local self-government can be discharged satisfactorily unless we have four to six boards for a district. If we can think of a

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system by which we can have four to six boards for a district instead of having one board for a taluk, we will be doing something to bring into existence a system of local bodies which will work without many practical difficulties. As has been already pointed out, if the district board appoints a district board engineer, or an educational officer or a health officer, he will have to do not only the work that he is now doing but at least three or four times that work. At present there are various other officers working under taluk boards who assist officers of the district board. If we abolish taluk boards and dispense with the services of officers working under taluk boards, the officers of the district board will have to be in charge of the whole district and it will not be possible for them to discharge their duties satisfactorily unless they have a number of subordinates under them such as assistant engineers, assistant health officers and assistant educational officers and so on. I am sure by the abolition of taluk boards, education is bound to suffer.

"It is said that the object of the Government in taking this step is to strengthen the hands of the panchayats, improve their status and give them additional powers so that they may serve more interests than they do at present. But the panchayat is a comparatively new institution. Although it existed before the British Government, it worked in a different way altogether from the panchayats that we have at present. Being a new institution, it will take some time before it could stand on its own legs and could be relied upon entirely for the administration of the area in its charge. Before that happens, I think a middle organization like a taluk board or a circle board is necessary between the district board and the panchayat.

"One of the most tragic results of the passing of this Act will be, as has been pointed out by hon. Members who have spoken before me, is the throwing out of employment of a large number of people, as many as 2,000. Of course, the Government may say: 'what does it matter if we add 2,000 persons to the army of unemployed which is already so big in our Province?' But certainly, it will be a wrong view to take of the matter. It will affect not only the 2,000 persons who are actually thrown out of employment, but it will affect their dependents also, most of whom are without employment. It will affect about 100,000 citizens of this Province. Are you going to throw these people out of employment and take the bread out of the mouths of about 100,000 people? Not only their bread, but their education and everything will be taken away. We have in this City and in the Province a large army of unemployed and the Government have done nothing to solve this problem which is becoming more and more acute every day. Instead of devising ways and means for finding employment for the unemployed, the Government would be adding to the army of unemployed, if they passed this Bill. May I ask, Sir, whether it is the duty of the Government to do so? (Sriman M. G. Patnaik Mahasaya: 'toll-gate contractors.') My hon. Friend, Mr. Patnaik, reminds me of toll-gate contractors. Of course there are not only toll-gate contractors, but a large number of people employed by these contractors. Even they were

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thrown out of employment and they are also there already. Therefore why add to the number by throwing out another 2,000 people who have at least 50,000 people depending on them and out of employment?

"Of course, I agree that there should be some solution to the difficulties facing the Government in the administration of local bodies, but this is not the remedy. If there is anything at the bottom of the trouble, it is the world-wide economic depression which has affected this country adversely. The people find that the taxes are too high and they are not able to pay them. That is why I say, we should not deal with this question in haste, as we dealt with the question of taxation of motor vehicles: We passed the Act in haste and repented afterwards."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The amendment as well as the main motion is for the discussion of the House."

* Diwan Bahadur B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—"Sir, the hon. the Chief Minister said that the Bill that he has introduced is one that is far-reaching in its character and would affect very seriously the structure of local self-governing institutions. And unless for the reasons given by him, it is found that the solution he has proposed is the only possible or perhaps the best solution that one can think of, I do not think that it will be right for this Council to accept the principle underlying the Bill and refer it to a Select Committee. He has stated that one of the principles of the Bill which he considers essential is the abolition of taluk boards. As regards the Village Development Fund, he has no objection to leave it as it is, if the Council so desires. Therefore it is all the more necessary for us to see whether the objects he has in view, firstly of placing the finances of local bodies on a more satisfactory basis and secondly of making the panchayats more efficient and useful bodies—whether these objects can be achieved by the Bill now proposed. I hope, Sir, in the observations I am going to make to show that neither of these objects can be achieved by this present Bill. If, therefore, I support the amendment proposed Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti, it is not with a view merely to criticise the Government but in order to see whether it is not necessary for the Government to get the co-operation of all parties and find out what will be the financial consequences of the various steps proposed in the Bill. If they do so they would be able to evolve a measure which will be not merely a party measure but a measure acceptable to all sides of the House and a measure which will solve the difficulties facing the local bodies. It is purely from that point of view that I propose to make a few remarks and not with a view to find faults. I am one of those who is keenly interested in local self-government and I should like to see that no hasty step is taken. There has been a lot of animadversion from all sides of the House about the hasty step taken in 1930 and with regard to the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act. Hon. Members have warned us that we should not repeat the mistake we committed in 1930. I quite agree with that. Whatever may be the reasons which have led to the failure of the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, I for my part would advise the Government not to commit the same mistake and be accused of having been hasty in a matter of this sort. So far as they are concerned, they

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are face to face with a situation where many of the taluk boards which have been recently constituted under the Act of 1930 are not in a position financially to make both ends meet, and continuing them in that state would only increase their financial embarrassments and they would probably have to be superseded. Secondly the district boards also are not in a good position financially and they must be rehabilitated. Now the proposal of the hon. the Chief Minister is to abolish taluk boards and to divide district boards into smaller units, if, after careful examination of the finances, it is found possible to have two or three district Boards working in a district financially safe and sound. The spirit of the amended Act of 1930 had been ignored in many of the discussions. The amended Act of 1930 was to see that the units which deal with self-government are, as far as possible, local units having control over every local area and therefore being in a position to come into touch with the villagers in the local area more easily and more often than a district board can do. Secondly, that Act was passed with a view to avoid multiple taluk boards. The result of multiple taluk boards was that a number of persons who formed the majority worked the administration to the disadvantage and prejudice of other taluks which were not equally well represented, not having a godfather in the president or the vice-president. That was the feeling that was expressed on the floor of this House from time to time. I quite remember the resolution passed, that the Rajahmundry Taluk Board which consists of three taluks together should be divided into three taluk boards. Two of these three taluks had rich deltaic areas and the third taluk was a very dry area and that was the headquarters taluk. The result was, to the chagrin and prejudice of the two taluks, most of the funds was utilized for the drier taluk to which the president invariably belonged, and which had a majority on its side. It is with a view to avoid this conflict of interests between taluks and taluks and to see that the responsibility of administering a particular area within their resources must be in their own hands, that the amended Act was passed. After the duplication of these taluk boards, the feeling has grown up that that was not a right step, and there is no doubt there is some feeling that favours a return to the old system of having one taluk board for two or three taluks so that it may be financially sound. Even that proposition the hon. the Chief Minister has dismissed as unworthy of acceptance on the ground that even before the Act of 1930 was passed, some of the multiple taluk boards were financially unsound and therefore that will be no remedy whatever. But, Sir, as I said, the principle would be agreed that in matters of village administration and rural improvement, those immediately concerned with the improvement of the village should take up the management. They will have direct touch with the villagers. It will be a small area and the members can therefore be expected—they are non-officials—to bring to bear their experience and their ideas in regard to the equal treatment of the people and to improve the benefits. I know that there is the view that as district panchayat officers have been appointed by the hon. the Chief Minister, the village panchayats will be improved by these officers. If

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the hon. the Chief Minister should subscribe to the proposition that all matters relating to panchayats will be attended to by these officers alone—the non-official element not having much to do with them—I have nothing more to say. There are the non-officials who come from the villages themselves and who would therefore be able to suggest the various improvements to be carried out, and their opinion would be very valuable. I think that is all the more reason why the panchayat officers should take some amount of non-official advice and help in such matters.

“ If we examine the position, what do we find? This Bill does not provide for a better machinery for the purpose of helping the panchayats themselves. There is a passage in the Government communiqué which is printed along with the Bill. It is stated that ‘ it is generally agreed that the village panchayat should be developed as the unit of local self-government.’ We must thank the hon. the Chief Minister for this. ‘ The Government now feel that they have neglected this institution for a very long time. Taluk boards are expected to develop the panchayats. But in actual practice they are opposed to each other and experience has shown that the present system has not been conducive to the healthy development of village panchayats.’ The reasons are not given why the taluk boards have failed in this matter. Is it because they are incompetent to do the work? Is it because the funds are not utilized well? I will explain to the House the reason. There is a provision in the amended Act of 1930 that, wherever a panchayat is constituted, a portion of the land-cess will go to it and the balance only will go to the taluk board. The result is that taluk boards are not anxious to encourage the formation and growth of panchayats. That is the reason why the panchayats are not encouraged by the taluk boards. I would like to ask the hon. the Chief Minister how he has improved the position, and what he has done in his Bill. He proposes to abolish the taluk boards. He has retained a provision that the panchayats will be given a portion of the land-cess. There is also another provision that what has hitherto been going to the taluk boards, will hereafter go to the district boards. As there are 5,000 panchayat boards, a sum of Rs. 5 lakhs will be taken away by them, and the balance of Rs. 11 lakhs will go to the district boards hereafter. Is it the opinion of the hon. the Chief Minister that the district boards are going to give better treatment to the panchayats? They would also like to retain for themselves all the money and not hand over the money to the panchayats. Will they actually help the panchayats being formed, with the sure result that thereby a portion of their income will go to them? This step will not help the development of panchayats. The second proposal is that instead of a quarter-anna share, the hon. the Chief Minister would give an half-anna share to the panchayats on the abolition of the taluk boards. Is that the line to proceed with regard to panchayats? I do not want to say anything derogatory of their work. Everybody is anxious, as the Government are, that panchayats should work on proper lines. In 1930 it was recognized as a principle that a portion at least of the money derived from the villages should be spent in the villages themselves. A portion at least of the money collected

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may be handed over to the panchayats for that purpose. Panchayats thus only get a small sum of say Rs. 50. A village extends to over 5 miles with 50 or 60 hamlets. The sum of Rs. 50 has to be distributed among 50 or 60 hamlets. The experience of two or three years has shown that such small sums given are wasted by panchayats and that, on the other hand, it is better to have schemes of improvement throughout and panchayat financed to carry out such definite schemes. Schemes should be framed to see that the village development fund is put to the best advantage and utilized in pursuance of such schemes.

"It has been the experience of those people who have been working the panchayats rather successfully, that under the law, they are not given satisfactory financial help. The panchayats have many activities, improvement of village roads, maintenance of small dispensaries, etc. It is found that unless some of the panchayats join together and co-operate, it will not be possible for them to attend to all these matters. When Diwan Bahadur Gopalaswami Ayyangar was Registrar-General of Panchayats, he allowed certain panchayats in the Guntur district and in the Ramachandrapuram taluk in the East Godavari district to work in a co-operative spirit. Recently the Government have ordered that the law would not provide for any expenditure to be incurred by unions of panchayats. We do not find any provision to that effect in the present Bill. Whatever money is available, it should, in my opinion, be distributed to the panchayats so that they might be able to spend it well and effectively under any scheme which would benefit not only one village but a number of villages round about. If the Government want to help the panchayats, they should be given enough money so that they can satisfy their needs more effectively. If the taluk boards did not have sufficient interest in the improvement of panchayats, it is for this reason; for the last 40 years the taluk boards were getting certain funds and they have been maintaining certain institutions like schools and hospitals, and roads, etc. They find that all the money they can command, is hardly sufficient to run these institutions efficiently so much so, they have not been able to open new institutions and take up new activities. Therefore it is that the existing local boards are merely in a position of collectors of revenue and exponents of the revenue. If really the panchayats have to be helped, it is better to allow them to have an organization like the taluk board whose members will be representatives of the villages in that area, so that that body can co-ordinate the activities of the panchayats. You can entrust that body with the power of utilizing well the cess collected in that area for the benefit of not only one village here and one village there but for the benefit of a number of villages round about. We do not find any provision to that effect in the Bill. What we find is the statement that the panchayats have been neglected by the taluk boards in the past and that the district boards are expected to do what the taluk boards have failed to do. The present Bill proposes that everything that was done by the taluk boards so far, should hereafter be done by the district boards. The apathy and mismanagement will therefore be still there, and the panchayats will be left in the cold. Only instead of a quarter-anna share, the panchayats will hereafter get half-anna share. We must

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devise some method, some organization by which the panchayats will have a small local body, on which the panchayats will be effectively represented and which will carry out their duties much more effectively and easily. Whatever may be the ultimate form in which the Bill has emerged, if the Government are keen on improving panchayats, I think that the Government should devise some body which would be more compact, which would be more representative of the panchayats and which would do the work more satisfactorily than it has been doing so far. From that point of view, I should consider that the abolition of the taluk boards is highly undesirable. By all means re-organize them, re-organize them financially, re-organize them administratively, make them more responsible and more representative of the panchayats. Once the panchayats are constituted, let there be a small body which will be a federation of these panchayats, which will do its work efficiently and effectively and which will suggest what improvements should be carried out which will benefit not only one village but a number of villages round about. They may also extend their activities to more than one village by opening certain centres which will help, say for running fairs, markets, etc., which will be not only to the advantage of one village but to the advantage of many villages. It is in that direction, Sir, that there should be improvement. It is useless to expect the president of a district board, however conscientious he may be, to discharge his duties satisfactorily, with more than 5,000 villages scattered throughout his district. It is absolutely impossible for any one man to do it, and I think, we will be going back, as my friend over there pointed out, to the old position, instead of advancing. Therefore, considered from the point of view of the actual interests of the villages, the present Bill does not serve that purpose at all.

“ Let us now examine it also from another point of view. Does this Bill carry out the objects of the Chief Minister in economising the expenditure or in seeing that the amounts spent are not misspent or spent in wrong directions, so that they may be made available for better purposes? The hon. the Chief Minister said that in the United Provinces, with a population of 45 millions, they have no taluk boards there but that they have a larger number of sub-district boards. Unfortunately, Sir, we are not in a position now to know whether panchayats exist in the United Provinces, what the organization there is for the purpose of effectively controlling those panchayats, how they are helping those panchayats and such other things. We are here in this province already with a panchayat organization and with an anxiety to see that that panchayat organization spreads as much as possible. That question, Sir, has to be answered and I think the Government have to find the necessary materials to show that the district boards in the United Provinces which have been quoted, have worked in the direction in which this Bill is going to enable the future district boards in this Presidency to work. We may of course have something like 40 or 45 district boards, always no doubt on the condition that the condition of each of those boards should be sound and that we are thoroughly satisfied that no district board will become pauperized

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later on. We agree with the hon. Minister there and accept his statement to that extent; but what is the consequence? I have not got the latest figures with me here; but taking the year 1928-29—the year before the Act of 1930 was passed—the cost of management—of course it includes a staff of a head clerk, a sarishtadar, two clerks, travelling allowance, office contingencies, etc., but so far as office management is concerned—we find that for the whole province, the district boards and the taluk boards among themselves spent about Rs. 18 lakhs. When we analyse the figures still further, we find that the taluk boards alone spent about Rs. 8 or Rs. 9 lakhs—and I think that is also the figure given by the Chief Minister in his communiqué, when he referred to the saving that would be incurred by way of expenditure on office management as a result of the abolition of taluk boards. As I say, about Rs. 8 lakhs were spent by about 130 taluk boards; and now under this Bill you propose to have additional district boards. What does it come to, I ask? More than one district board for a district will mean that the present 25 district boards now functioning, with another 25 district boards added to them, will spend twice the amount, i.e., Rs. 20 lakhs as against the Rs. 18 lakhs now spent both by the district boards and the taluk boards at present. I do not want to hazard figures, Sir; I have the report itself here, and at page 144, I find that the first district is Anantapur. In the case of Anantapur, the district board expenditure is Rs. 20,000 and that of all the taluk boards is Rs. 20,000. If you take South Arcot, the district board spent Rs. 40,000 and all the taluk boards put together spent Rs. 42,000. If you take Bellary again, the district board spent Rs. 20,000 while the taluk boards spent Rs. 18,000. No doubt in certain cases in the delta areas, the expenditure of taluk boards was a little more, but there again the income of some taluk boards would be as big as that of a district board in Ceded districts. Anyway, if you take the average, taking all things into consideration, you find that the taluk boards all put together generally spend very nearly an amount equal to what the district board alone is spending in any district. Therefore, I say, if you are going to increase the number of district boards from 25 to 45, where is the money for their expenditure to come from? You will practically be spending on the establishment, management, etc., of the new district board what the taluk boards are spending or in some cases probably even more. It is stated in the communiqué:

‘It is anticipated that if the above proposals are given effect to, district boards will be placed in a stronger financial position and that there will be little difficulty in meeting the small additional expenditure involved in the splitting up of the more unwieldy boards.’

“I hope the Government are right in their calculations; but from the figures in the administration report for the year 1929, it looks to me that they are not correct in their assumption. On the other hand, I think that the immediate effect of cutting up the district boards into at least two, by doubling their present number, would be that you would be swelling up the expenditure as against the amount which it is hoped to save by the abolition of the taluk boards. The present Bill does not stop there; it goes further. Curiously enough, we had the

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appointment of 25 panchayat officers, whether the district boards liked it or not. So far as Malabar and South Kanara are concerned, when I toured those districts, I found they had no panchayats. I should like the presidents of those district boards, if they are here, to correct me if I am wrong when I say that we don't have any panchayats there, not even in the nature of union boards which we generally find in the East Coast districts. In those particular cases, the panchayat officers were not necessary; but if you are going to create more district boards, as the Bill says, then you will have one district board engineer, one educational officer, one panchayat officer, etc., in addition. (An hon. Member: 'No') My friend here says 'No'; but he is not the author of the Bill (Laughter). This is what is stated in the communiqué:

'If smaller district boards are constituted, it is proposed to have one District Board Engineer, and one District Panchayat Officer for each of the new district boards, but to have only one District Health Officer for an entire revenue district since the latter officer works largely under the direction of the Director of Public Health.'

"Certainly a panchayat officer must be there; but what will be the cost of having these district board engineers? They will cost in themselves something like Rs. 2 lakhs. The panchayat officer will cost another Rs. 2 lakhs; so that you will observe . . ."

The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"On a small point of explanation, Sir. It is expected that we would be appointing one district board engineer for each of the new district boards; but there will be a reduction in the number of assistant engineers. On the average, an assistant engineer will cost about Rs. 350 while a district board engineer will cost about Rs. 600. So, it is expected that each district board engineer for the new boards will cost only about Rs. 250 while there will be a saving under 'assistant engineers'."

Diwan Bahadur B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—"But our sad experience has been not only to have district board engineers but assistant engineers also, because the district board engineer always wants the help of an assistant engineer. So far as district boards are concerned, they have retrenched assistant engineers to the lowest number possible. In many districts they have abolished a few of the assistant engineers already, but the provision in the Bill for the new district boards will mean that you will revive the assistant engineers' posts which have already been abolished. Whatever that may be, Sir, it cannot be said that there will be no additional expenditure incurred under that head. If you are going to have that additional expenditure, I ask, is it worthwhile abolishing the taluk boards and spending the money so saved on the offices of the district boards to come, their management, their engineers, panchayat officers, etc., and their establishments? I dare say each one of these officers would like to have his own office, his own contingencies, his own stationery, his own personal clerk and so on. As one who has been in touch with these boards, I know how these things go on multiplying from time to time. The result is that, though we start in the beginning with only one officer, there will be a good number of people who will have to be appointed as subordinates. Again,

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Sir, we have the provision here for an educational officer. That will again cost a lot of money. That is why I submit, Sir, that so far as any saving of expenditure is concerned consequent on the abolition of these taluk boards, I do not think it is really going to be such a large saving as it is expected it would be, nor can the statement that there is going to be any saving in the number of assistant engineers be correct.

“ There is another point. If there is any principle in having smaller boards with a view to get local opinion mobilized and to make the local people feel that their area is not being neglected, then the abolition of the taluk boards would lead to a centralization—I may even say over-centralization—of all power in the hands of one man, i.e., the president of the district board. When you take away the local boards and leave all the schools to be managed, about 500 or 600 of them, by the district board, the district board will have to increase its own staff. You will also be depriving the people in the local areas of the benefit of having their own local representatives on the boards who would speak on the lack of required number of schools in their locality or on the proper working thereof and such things. In that way, you will be indirectly substituting official control for the present non-official supervision; and I do not think anybody can subscribe to the principle that where non-official help is being taken, now, it should be scrapped completely and that we should go back to the old system of efficient official control. Nobody would grudge some amount of official control; but we are in our places here to see that non-official supervision does not suffer in efficiency, so that the administration itself might be perfect. If you really want to ascertain popular opinion in all matters, it is absolutely necessary that we should have smaller boards. The result of this abolition of taluk boards is rather doubtful and problematical, and I do not think it is really consistent with democratic principle, that we should sacrifice the possibility of having the help and co-operation of people from local areas and concentrating the whole power in one district board president.

“ There is also another important consideration. In this Bill there is really no attempt at trying to make the future district boards more efficient. We have had a Bill passed recently by which in most of the municipalities, executive officers were appointed; the important point there was to take away the executive powers vested in the chairman and vest them in the executive officer, so that all appointments, etc., in the subordinate ranks could be made by the executive officer himself. But what do we find in this Bill. The president with his wide powers will be there, and an executive officer will be appointed only if the Government so direct. Such officer would have no power or executive authority; the non-official president will not be relieved of the responsibility for carrying out the duties which are mostly in the nature of administrative work and which are not always popular. Therefore, I suggest that whatever the state of work, the hon. the Chief Minister will have to bear in mind that he should make definite provisions in this Bill that in the district boards, an executive officer will be appointed and that wherever the words ‘ President of the District Board ’

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occur, the words 'executive officer' are substituted, so that the executive authority may be vested in him and the officer may carry out whatever duties or works are laid down for him by the district board; and he will be directly responsible to the Government for attending to all necessary administrative work, including that of contracts, as he will be ultimately controlled and removed by the Government.

These are the directions, Sir, in which the Bill has failed seriously to tackle the problem. When we went through this Bill, it was not without some misgiving that we saw this proposal to bifurcate the district boards. I do not know if this provision is there for the purpose of satisfying some of those who have been thrown out of the office of district board president. Whatever it may be, I am afraid it will be a step in the wrong direction. May I, in this connexion, refer the hon. the Chief Minister to the opinion of one gentleman connected with the administration of the Local Self-Government Department, viz., Diwan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao who gave out his opinion that so far as education is concerned, it should be divorced from district and taluk boards. If you divorce the district or taluk board from elementary education and give it to the educational councils without sufficient safeguards, the same defects will continue to exist and it will not go far towards satisfying the needs of the people, except that there will be a mere transfer of control of hundreds of schools from the district boards. If such a step is taken, it must be possible to keep the local boards purely as organizations of panchayats, filled up by members who will be elected by panchayats and who will carry out the work of the panchayats and the money that is now being spent on the taluk boards can be ear-marked as a village development fund, from out of which the panchayat organizations will spend money for the benefit of the panchayat areas concerned.

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"Now, Sir, one can multiply instances of the way in which these things could be held. But certainly it is not my purpose to go about multiplying the instances. Some of these suggestions are made with a view to make them feel what their idea is, to make them feel that there are other methods which have to be explored before we take the extreme step. We should see if any alternative methods are available to see to what extent the present taluk boards can be changed to serve the interests of the panchayats than by killing them and making them the stepchildren of the district boards. It is not a step in the right direction. If there was one merit in the existing enactment it is in the constitution of the Village Development Fund.

"A special officer was appointed to consider to what extent the institutions under the taluk boards may be reorganized, having regard to the position of each taluk board. The object is that if in the case of any particular taluk board, if any institution was being maintained which could as well be done by the district board, then that institution may be handed over to the district board, thus relieving the taluk board of the responsibility for the institution and making it financially safe. If after such examination of the resources of each taluk board and the

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institutions maintained by it it is found that relief could be given to each one of such taluk boards by transferring some of the institutions to the district board, that will be one method in which the taluk boards' solvency could be restored. If, after transferring the institutions from the taluk boards, the district board finances require some strengthening up, then it was open to the Government to consider methods by which such strengthening could be done. Possibly one method will be to give a quarter-anna cess reserved for the Village Development Fund to the district board and make it a part of its general resources as a temporary measure. I ask, Sir, the Chief Minister whether he had taken any step in that direction towards the examination of the question of the reorganization of the taluk boards. The difficulty arose like this. The Government took away the headquarters hospitals to be managed by themselves. In such cases, the result was that considerable relief was given to certain taluk boards. The result is that there is not a uniformity of relief given to the taluk boards. It is therefore necessary to go into the question of the maintenance of the institutions under each taluk board and see what institutions could be taken away from them and handed over to the district boards. I may here point out that in 1920 a Committee was appointed called The Financial Relations Committee, presided over by Sir Muhammad Habibullah, and the members of it represented various district boards. It was decided by that committee that the relationship financially between the Government and the district boards should be readjusted on certain lines so that the Government might take responsibility for its due share of certain services. In regard to the trunk roads, the principle was accepted that the Government should bear the entire cost of maintenance and that the district board would be a mere agency to carry out the works subject to the whole cost being recouped by the Government. The district boards are now spending about 6 to 7 lakhs from their own resources, in addition to the Government grant to keep up the trunk roads. The Government therefore will have to make good that extra 6 to 7 lakhs which the district boards are meeting from their own resources. In regard to the second-class roads, the principle that was laid down was that the Government should make itself responsible for half the net cost and the district board should meet the other half cost. I believe now the district boards are spending on second-class roads something like 8 to 9 lakhs more than what they should had the Government met half the cost. The Government now gave only a definite sum of 14 lakhs though their share will be somewhere between 20 to 22 lakhs. As regards the high schools, a similar proposal was made and if the Government gave effect to it, there will be some saving to the district boards. If the Financial Relations Committee's report had been accepted in all these matters, there will be a substantial addition to the income of the district boards. In 1922, Government did not accept them on the ground of financial stringency. I have been at pains when I was in office to look into the position as to how much of these district boards' funds were being spent on capital works. It was found that

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the district boards had been spending large amounts in 1929-30 and before by way of opening new roads and making improvements. All these were possible because of the growing sources of revenue. In 1930, the income had fallen down. It was up to these bodies not to indulge in capital expenditure, but to continue services at normal state. Are not the Government to-day trying to do that? Are they not giving a remission to the ryots at the expense of Part II Schemes? Why not these boards do the same? I do hope that times are not going to be like these. Merely because we are face to face with a serious economic crisis, are we to abolish the taluk boards? The economic crisis affects not only the taluk boards and not only the district boards, but even Governments in the world. But, surely, the Government cannot avoid their liability and try to plunder the taluk boards for moneys to which the district boards are entitled from the Government. I am sure that in future years when the finances improve, the district boards could get the benefit from the Government and could be relieved to a considerable extent. But to get over the present financial year, it may be possible for the Government to come to the aid of the district boards temporarily. In that manner, the position of the taluk boards and the district boards may be saved. We are legislating for the future and not merely to meet the present difficulties. I think it would not be right that because we are now face to face with a temporary difficulty, the taluk boards should be abolished. As I have already said, the functions of the taluk boards must hereafter be to act as a sort of a small local authority co-ordinating the activities of the panchayats, helping the formation of new panchayats and taking steps to carry out such schemes of village development and improvement as may be in the interests of the group of villages. Reduced to those functions, the taluk boards have still a field for usefulness. Government might believe that panchayats can be formed and developed through official agencies by the appointment of the District Panchayat Officer. By that there is room for one officer or more than one officer. Their work will be purely official. They cannot bring to the work the influence which non-officials can command and the enthusiasm and the willingness which the non-officials' co-operation can ensure. If the hon. the Chief Minister should think that the officials alone should do all the work and the non-officials have no place, then I have no quarrel with him. But the whole idea of the taluk boards is that non-officials should be brought into active touch with the local problems and their experience and help should be availed of. Viewed from that point of view, it will be a retrograde step to abolish the taluk boards and to deprive the panchayats of the influence and co-operation which the non-officials in the locality can give. After all, the taluk boards are intended as organizations where people can be trained in the art of managing their own institutions. It will be running contrary to that spirit to abolish these taluk boards and deprive the people of that opportunity. Then, what about the Adi-Dravidas and Muslims that have been finding a place in these bodies? They were there in order to afford opportunities for all classes to get trained in the art of administration of local self-government.

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None of these communities will have sufficient opportunities hereafter of being trained in the art of local self-government. It will go a long way if people rub their shoulders together to know what administration is, what difficulties there are in the administration, and thus educate themselves in the administration of local self-government. For these reasons, the Government will be well advised to have a committee appointed for the purpose of seeing in what manner the financial difficulties could be readjusted and to explore other methods in which you can solve the situation and to see if while keeping the taluk boards serve the purposes for which they were intended the Bill could not be amended on such lines. It is time to consider to what extent the taluk boards may be reorganized so as to serve the purposes of the panchayats, and to see that their constitution is altered in a manner to permit the representation really of the panchayats. Their main purpose will be to organize these panchayats and to distribute these funds intended for rural reconstruction and thus to give an effective chance for the panchayats, to improve. It is from this point of view, I press that the Government will do well to consider their provisions carefully and avail themselves of the opportunity which by this resolution, we propose to give to make them consider the views of others and to see in what manner the proposed legislation could be modified in a manner acceptable to all."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Further discussion on this will continue on 2nd February.

"I appoint Mr. M. A. Muthiah Chettiyar as the Chairman of the Select Committee regarding the Bill further to amend the Madras City Civil Court Act.

"I may inform now that the agenda for to-morrow has not been received from the Government Press and so they could not be distributed this evening. The office will try to distribute the agenda papers to the Members to their City addresses to-night.

"For the information of the hon. Members I wish to tell that to-morrow we will take up non-official work consisting of Mr. Patnaik's Impartible Estates Bill, Mr. Basu Dev's Money Lenders Bill, Mr. Bhanoji Rao's Impartible Estates Bill and other Bills which are in the stage of introduction."

The House will now adjourn and meet again to-morrow at 11 a.m.

XIII.—PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE.

* 1. *Notification regarding dissolution and reconstitution of Palacole Municipal Council.*

† 2. *G.O. No. 2430, P.H., dated 31st October 1933, refusing reconsideration of G.O. No. 1118, P.H., dated 23rd May 1933, regarding the resolution passed by Salem Municipal Council on the accessibility to the untouchables in coffee clubs and sweetmeat shops.*

* Published in the Fort St. George Gazette, dated 14th November 1933.

† Printed as Appendix XII on pages 116-117 infra.